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A

SCRIPTURAL REFUTATION

OF A

PAMPHLET,

LATELY PUBLISHED BY THE REV. RAYMUND HARRIS,

INTITLED,

"SCRIPTURAL RESEARCHES

ON THE

LICITNESS OF THE SLAVE TRADE."

In FOUR LETTERS from the AUTHOR to a FRIEND.

THE SECOND EDITION.

——"from love of grace
Lay not *his flattering unction* to your souls."

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MDCCLXXXVIII.

A

Scriptural Refutation, &c.

LETTER I.

I HAVE perused with some degree of attention, the very extraordinary pamphlet which you lately sent me, intitled, "*Scriptural Researches on the* LICITNESS *of the Slave Trade, by the Rev. Raymund Harris*;" in which the author has endeavoured to shew "*its conformity with the principles of natural and revealed religion, as delineated in the sacred writings of the word of God.*"

Although I have not that high opinion of the state of improvement, in this age and country, which many persons profess to entertain, yet I own I could not avoid being surprised, that either the one or the other, should have been insulted by the publication of a work, which, if its dangerous and destructive principles were admitted in their full extent, would shake the foundations of society, and establish, *by the sanction of divine autho-*

rity, every variety of oppreſſion, and every ſpecies of guilt.

The ſhort account you gave me of the character and profeſſion of the author, operated however as a ſort of comment on his work. The unnatural attachment to ſlavery—the averſion and dread of the interference of reaſon and common ſenſe—the artful and ſubtle poſitions which are the foundation of his work, appear totally irreconcileable to the character of an *Engliſhman*, but are perfectly conſiſtent with that of *a Spaniſh Jeſuit*.

I muſt not, however, charge the Rev. Raymund Harris with being the firſt who has openly attempted the juſtification of moral guilt from the books of the Old and New Teſtament. So long ago as the beginning of the 15th century, one *John Petit*, a doctor of the church in France, not only publickly juſtified the murder of the Duke of Orleans, by the Duke of Burgundy, but took occaſion, at the ſame time, to aſſert the *general legality* (or, as it is now expreſſed, the *licitneſs*) of homicide, which he founded on the example of all the murders mentioned in the Old Teſtament, by making that *a rule of conduct*, which was only introduced as *a mere hiſtorical narrative*.

As I have at preſent a little leiſure, I think I cannot employ it to better purpoſe, than in ſtripping the maſk from this concealed enemy of order and religion, and expoſing him to the world in his proper colours. But before I enter on the examination of his work, it may not be improper to premiſe, that I ſhall confine myſelf to the mode of proof he has himſelf preſcribed; viz. *to that derived from the authority of the ſacred writings only*—not thinking it in any degree neceſſary in the refutation

futation of his work, to reſort to thoſe more general arguments which are derived from the nature of man, and the univerſal principles of truth and juſtice, as implanted in the human mind, by the immediate hand of its great Author; nor availing myſelf of an objection, which might be reaſonably made, viz. That in diſcuſſing a matter of right between the Europeans and the Africans, an appeal is made to an authority, which one of the parties only acknowledge as legitimate.

But though I ſhall confine myſelf to the proofs and authorities deduced from the ſacred writings, yet I cannot ſo far coincide with Mr. H's wiſh, as entirely to diveſt myſelf of "*the ſcanty light of mere human reaſon and ſenſe*," which, notwithſtanding the opprobium thrown upon it by Mr. H. in his preface, I cannot help thinking, is in ſome degree neceſſary, to enable us to underſtand thoſe writings. Mr. H. indeed afterwards informs us, that he has prefixed to the whole of his work, a few poſitions or data, which he truſts will be found unqueſtionably true, and *exactly conformable to ſound reaſon*; and thus, whilſt in one breath he impeaches the authority of this ultimate judge of truth, in the next he admits it to queſtion his firſt principles.

With this permiſſion then, I ſhall, in the preſent letter, take the liberty of ſtating a few of his data (which are twelve in number), and trying whether they are conſiſtent with ſound reaſon or not; in which I ſhall endeavour to be as conciſe as the nature of the ſubject will admit.

His 1ſt and 2d poſitions are,

" *That the volume of the ſacred writings,*
" *commonly called the Holy Bible, compre-*
" *hending both the Old and New Teſta-*
" *ments, contains the unerring deciſions of*
" *the word of God. That theſe deciſions are*
" *of equal authority in both the Teſtaments;*
" *and that that authority is the eſſential ve-*
" *racity of God, who is truth itſelf.*"

Now if we for a moment apply to theſe poſitions the touchſtone of human reaſon, we ſhall find that ſome of them are fundamentally falſe; and that all of them are to be underſtood with many reſtrictions and exceptions. That the Old and New Teſtaments contain the unerring deciſions of God, where God has expreſsly given them to us as his deciſions, every Chriſtian will readily admit; but it is obvious, that the far greater part of the Old and New Teſtaments, conſiſt, not of *deciſions*, but *of mere hiſtorical facts*, ſome of them affording inſtances of a virtuous, and others of a vicious conduct. That other parts of the ſcriptures, even where ſuch deciſions are found, are not of general uſe, but are applicable only to *particular times, or to a particular people.* That *it is not true* that the deciſions of the Old and New Teſtaments are of equal authority, for that the former is always controlled by the latter; which has totally abrogated many parts of the Moſaic law, and made an eſſential difference, not only in the ritual, but in the moral duties enjoined by the Old Teſtament, as I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to ſhew more at large.

The

The eſſence of his four next poſitions is, *That whatever is declared to be right or wrong in the ſcriptures, is ſo in its nature, and cannot be queſtioned without great preſumption; but muſt be aſſented to without reſerve, however contrary it may be to the opinions of men for any length of time.* But theſe poſitions are alſo laid down in a form, much too general to be admitted by the profeſſors of any religion, except that in which the reverend author was educated. It will readily be granted, that whenever the ſcriptures have decided on general principles of right and wrong, ſuch deciſions are unerring; but it muſt alſo be granted, that when thoſe deciſions have a reference to the ſituation of a particular perſon, or a particular nation, they ought not to be arbitrarily and indiſcriminately applied to other perſons, or other nations: And if from the powers given to the Jews over their enemies, the permiſſion of certain acts in particular caſes, and the exiſtence of certain cuſtoms amongſt them, we were to infer a right in ourſelves, to imitate their actions, and practiſe their cuſtoms, whenever we thought there was a ſimilarity in our ſituation, the book of the Old Teſtament might be converted into a *general voucher* for the *licitneſs* of almoſt every crime, and every enormity, whether national or individual.

Mr. H. proceeds in his 5th datum to ſtate, " *That if one or more deciſions of the* " *written word of God give a poſitive ſanc-* " *tion to the intrinſic licitneſs of any human* " *purſuit, for inſtance, the Slave Trade, who-* " *ever profeſſes to believe the incontrovert-* " *ible veracity of the written word of God*

" *eſſentially incompatible with the leaſt degree*
" *of injuſtice, muſt conſequently believe the*
" *purſuit itſelf to be intrinſically juſt and*
" *lawful in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word.*"

From this poſition then it would ſeem that all actions which have, under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, been practiſed by the ſanction of divine authority, are intrinſically and univerſally right, and may be practiſed by all mankind, in all future times, not only without guilt, but with the ſtricteſt virtue and propriety; and this moſt extenſive rule is founded on a preſumption, that what God has, on one occaſion, declared to be right, muſt alſo be right on all other occaſions, without any attention to the particular circumſtances of each. Suppoſing this poſition to be once granted, it is doubtful whether the depravity of man could commit a crime for which Mr. H. would not, from the ſacred writings, extract a better apology than he has already done for the Slave Trade. Thus, for inſtance, if any man doubted of the inherent licitneſs of

I N C E S T,

It would be eaſy for Mr. Harris to point out the examples of the daughters of Lot, who each of them conceived by their father;* which tranſaction, ſo far from being repreſented as criminal, not only paſſes free from the leaſt ſhadow of reprehenſion, but the offſpring of this intercourſe,

* Gen. c. xix. v. 30.

became

became the founders of two powerful nations. Jacob's marrying two ſiſters,* by each of whom he had children, and who purchaſed of each other his favours,† would be an expreſs authority. Were a doubt ſtill entertained of the licitneſs of the crime, Mr. H. might refer to the general laws of the Jews, by which the ſurviving brother was commanded to go in unto his brother's wife, and marry her, and raiſe up ſeed to his brother; and might point out an inſtance where a refuſal to comply with this injunction, brought down upon the offender the immediate vengeance of God.‡ Mr. H. might then advert to the ſtate of mankind in the firſt age of the world, when the commiſſion of this crime was not only excuſable, but indiſpenſably neceſſary to the preſervation of the ſpecies; and thus the inherent licitneſs of this heinous offence would be much more ſatisfactorily proved than the lawful nature of the African Slave Trade, notwithſtanding the indefatigable labour which Mr. H. has beſtowed upon it.

F R A U D.

Should any perſon entertain ſcruples of conſcience, with reſpect to the lawfulneſs of defrauding his neighbour, let him adopt Mr. H's poſition, and open the Old Teſtament. He will there find that the patriarch Jacob, the immediate founder and ſtock of the Jewiſh nation, under pretence of a purchaſe, defrauded his brother Eſau

* Gen. chap. xxix. † Gen. chap. xxx. ver. 15.
‡ Gen. chap. xxxviii. v. 8.

of

of his birth-right;* and in order to complete this firſt piece of treachery, was induced, by a contrivance of the moſt artful nature, to obtain from his father Iſaac, the bleſſing of the firſt-born, to the wrong and prejudice of his elder brother. Should he ſtill remain doubtful, he may turn to another incident in the life of the ſame patriarch, related at large Gen. ch. xxx. ver. 25. in which he will find a ſtratagem put in execution by Jacob to defraud Laban, his father-in-law, which, according to his poſition, will juſtify the inherent licitneſs of cheating beyond the ſhadow of contradiction. To theſe authentic facts, which were the foundation of Jacob's greatneſs, he may add the authorities that may be deduced from Exod. ch. xi. ver. 2. and ch. xii. ver. 35. where the Iſraelites abuſed the confidence of the Egyptians, and deprived them of their jewels, by an expreſs command of their great lawgiver; and the evident concluſion of his *Scriptural Reſearches on the licitneſs of fraud* will be, that every man has an inherent right, by the expreſs ſanction of the holy ſcriptures, to defraud his neighbour; nay, *even his brother or his father*, as often as it lies in his power.

It would thus be practicable, under the ſanction of Mr. H's 7th poſition, to ſelect, from the books of the Old Teſtament, the moſt evident and inconteſtable authorities, not only for the lawfulneſs of lying, theft, polygamy, and fornication, but of the more atrocious crimes of murder, adultery, and revenge; but it is irkſome to proceed further under the guidance of *ſo deteſtable a propoſition*, which, under a pretence of paying an

* Gen. ch. xxv. ver. 29.

implicit

implicit deference to the judgments of God, excludes every conſideration of a collateral nature, and thereby renders unjuſt and criminal in its general application, that which in the particular inſtance, and under peculiar circumſtances, was right and lawful, and calls in the authority of the word of God to juſtify the commiſſion of crimes of the deepeſt dye.

The remainder of the author's data are employed to ſtate in various lights, *that if any act* (*e. g. the Slave Trade*) *be abſtractedly and eſſentially lawful, no abuſe or mal-practice can render the principle of it criminal; and that no arguments built ſolely on thoſe abuſes can have any weight, unleſs the ſame be proved eſſentially unjuſt and illicit.*

To attempt a diſtinction between the abſtract nature of any thing and the effects produced by it, is well worthy one of the diſciples of Loyola; but though theſe ſubtleties might have paſſed current in the days of our anceſtors, they are now ſomewhat out of ſeaſon. A ſort of maxim has prevailed, that it is improper to reaſon from the abuſe of any given ſubject, againſt the uſe of it; but it will ſurely be granted, that a proneneſs to abuſe is itſelf ſtrong evidence that ſomething is wrong in the principle. It was not by ſubtle diſtinctions of this kind that our Saviour inſtructed his followers: He taught us to judge of the cauſe by its effects, and not to ſuppoſe that could be right in its principle, which was manifeſtly wrong in its conſequences.—" *A good tree, ſays he, cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit; wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them*, Matt. chap. vii. ver. 18, 20. What have been the fruits of the African Slave Trade

Trade I leave to the determination of Mr. H. who, by declining to ſubmit to this teſt, ſhews pretty clearly the ſenſe he entertains of the cauſe he has undertaken to defend.

From theſe remarks I truſt it will evidently appear, that although the ſcriptures contain the written will of God, yet, as in reading the ſacred volumes we muſt uſe our eyes, ſo, in underſtanding them, we muſt make uſe of our reaſon. It is true, the Church of Rome prohibits its followers not only from conſidering, but peruſing the ſcriptures; and requires them to be implicitly acknowledged as equally and invariably true in all parts. But the Proteſtant Churches have diſcarded theſe narrow reſtraints, and not only permit, but require us to examine the ſcriptures with the utmoſt degree of attention and care. Shall we then ſo far ſuffer ourſelves to be blinded by the propoſitions, or by the ſubſequent denunciations of Mr. H. as to give up at his ſimple requeſt, a right for which our anceſtors ſtruggled at the expenſe of their blood? Or ſhall we not rather, like men and Proteſtants, judge for ourſelves of the ſpirit and tendency of the holy ſcriptures? Under this idea it will then be neceſſary, before we ground our conduct upon the precepts or examples they afford us, diligently to examine whether ſuch examples and precepts are *of general and univerſal import*, or only confined to a particular perſon or people. Whether ſome things, which are allowed or commanded in the Old Teſtament, *be not annulled or explained in the New*, and conſtantly to make the moſt accurate diſtinction between ſuch paſſages as ought to influence our conduct, and *ſuch as are merely narrative*. By theſe means we ſhall perceive,

ceive, that it would be as abſurd to aſſert that the inhabitants of Great Britain can be juſtified in carrying away the natives of Africa from their country and friends to perpetual ſervitude, *becauſe* the Jews had domeſtic ſlaves in their houſes, as to ſuppoſe that we have a right to deſtroy all the nations round us, *becauſe* Joſhua ſmote thirty-one kings on the other ſide of the River Jordan.*

* Joſhua, chap. xii. ver. 7.

LETTER

LETTER II.

I HAVE in my former letter ſhewn, that the *data* required by Mr. H. are ſuch as cannot be granted, without conſiderable reſtrictions upon their import, by any perſon who aſſumes the character of a Proteſtant, or profeſſes to make uſe of his reaſon in the examination of the ſcriptures. In the preſent, I ſhall point out in what manner his ſubſequent arguments in favour of the Slave Trade, are affected by this correction of his firſt principles.

Having ſtated as a poſition, that every thing contained in the ſcriptures is equally true, and univerſally applicable; without any exception whatever of *perſon*, *time*, or *place*, or the conſideration of *any concurring circumſtance*, he proceeds to ſhew, that the cuſtom of ſlavery was permitted in the ancient world, and cites the particular examples of Abraham, Joſeph, and Joſhua, with many texts on the ſubjects; occupying the greateſt part of his pamphlet with demonſtrating, what no one ever thought of denying, viz. *that the Jews were allowed to purchaſe bond-men and bond-women of the Heathen*; and under certain ſtipulations to retain

retain in their ſervice, even thoſe of their own country.

But it is ſurely ſomewhat extraordinary, that ſo acute a Logician, after having at ſuch length laid down his premiſes, and ſanctioned them by ſuch numerous appeals to holy writ, ſhould be *ſo miſerably defective* in drawing his concluſions from them. After having ſhewn the *licitneſs* of Slavery to the Jews and their immediate anceſtors, it might have been expected, that the author would thence have deduced *the right of the Europeans to enſlave the inhabitants of Africa*; but on this important head he is totally ſilent: and the whole of his reaſonings, and reſearches, are equally calculated to prove, *that the negroes have an inherent right to take us and our families, and carry us into perpetual ſlavery*, as that we have *a right to purſue the African Slave Trade.*

That the Iſraelites had the permiſſion of the Divine Being, to retain in their ſervice bondmen and bond-women of the Heathen, and even of their own nation, for a limited time, is granted; but this permiſſion appears to have been particularly confined to that nation, and was not extended to the reſt of mankind: Nor is there in Mr. H's reſearches, the leaſt ground to conclude, that any particular nation ſucceeded to that extraordinary privilege over other nations, which was exerciſed by, and allowed to the children of Iſrael.*

* That the practice of *Man-ſtealing*, as the object of a general law, was conſidered, both under the old and new diſpenſation, as a crime of the higheſt magnitude, may appear from Exodus ch. xxi. ver. 16. Paul's 1ſt Epiſtle to Tim. ch. i. ver. 9 and 10.

Let

Let us ſuppoſe then, that ſome particular perſon, accuſed of exerciſing a right which interfered with the welfare of his neighbour, ſhould riſe up before his judges, and inform them by many authorities, that the ſame right had been exerciſed by a certain perſon, at ſome former, but remote period of time; and having proved this, to the ſatisfaction of the court, ſhould ſit himſelf down, in complacent expectation of a decree in his favour. Would either the judges, or auditors, think him intitled to that decree, till he had alſo gone one ſtep further, and demonſtrated, that *he was the perſon who had legally ſucceeded to ſuch right?*

But perhaps Mr. H. will contend, that the permiſſion of retaining ſlaves *was not confined to the Jews*, but was a *general law*, extending to the whole human race. Now, though I ſhall by no means acquieſce in this conſtruction of the ſacred books, yet let us for a moment ſee what the author of the pamphlet would gain by ſuch a conceſſion. The reſult would ſimply be, that by the *unerring deciſion of the great parent of the univerſe*, the ſtronger nation or individual would have an *inherent right* to oppreſs and reduce to ſervitude, the weaker. A ſuppoſition as injurious to the Divine Goodneſs, as any of thoſe, upon which Mr. H. has beſtowed the epithets of blaſphemous and preſumptuous.

Thus then you will perceive, that the ordinances of God are ſometimes of a general nature, having reference to all mankind; and ſometimes of a particular nature, having reference only to the people to whom they are immediately delivered. That the firſt are uniformly and invariably

ably juſt and true, and that the ſecond are alſo juſt and true, when applied to the ſubject on which they are intended to operate; but may become unjuſt, and improper, when applied *at the will of man* to other purpoſes, and on other occaſions.

As I apprehend this to be a diſtinction of great importance in the preſent debate, I ſhall take the trouble of giving you an illuſtration of it; by ſhewing how differently the principles required by Mr. H. operate upon any given ſubject, when admitted in their full extent, and when taken with the reſtrictions I have ventured to lay upon them. Let this be taken from the firſt inſtance mentioned in the pamphlet, and on which Mr. H. lays the great weight of his cauſe, aſſerting, "That were all other ſcriptural evidences wanting "in favour of the Slave Trade, this decree alone "muſt convince every impartial reader, that the "*licitneſs* of that trade is evidently warranted by "the written word of God."

The ſtory is that of HAGAR * the handmaid of Sarai, who after ſhe had conceived a ſon by Abram her maſter, fled from the ſight of her miſtreſs, becauſe ſhe dealt hardly with her; and was found near a fountain of water in the wilderneſs by an angel of the Lord; who ordered her to return to her miſtreſs, and ſubmit herſelf under her hands, with a promiſe that the Lord would multiply her ſeed exceedingly.

Now in making the *particular inſtance* of God's dealings with Hagar (for which there is no doubt he had the beſt and wiſeſt reaſons) a *general rule*,

* Gen. c. xvi.

to be applied on ſimilar occaſions, Mr. H. attempts to eſtabliſh a mode of proof, which, if admitted, would tear up the foundations of ſociety; — introduce and ſanctify a courſe of conduct at open variance with the firſt laws of truth and juſtice, as derived from God; and render it eaſy to juſtify any crime which the moſt abandoned profligate might be induced to commit.

" Every circumſtance, ſays he, attending the " wretched ſituation of *this poor African Slave*, " who though *legally married to her maſter*, is kept " ſtill in bondage, and forced as it were out of " his houſe and ſervice, in the condition ſhe was " in *through hard uſage and ſeverity*, ſeems to excite " compaſſion, and juſtify her eſcape."

Having thus allowed the apparent injuſtice of Hagar's ſufferings, he proceeds.

" Were Hagar's caſe that of any African Female " Slave now in the Weſt Indies, and were the ſame " to be tried before a jury compoſed of *ſome of* " *the preſent advocates for African liberty in this* " *iſland*, one might decide almoſt to a certainty " in whoſe favour the verdict would be given: " The ſlave would moſt probably be declared " free; and both maſter and miſtreſs ſeverely " reprimanded, if not alſo condemned in a heavy " pecuniary mulct. No other verdict would be " conſiſtent with the principles *they ſo publickly* " *avow*.—But did HAGAR obtain the ſame favour- " able ſentence at the impartial tribunal of God, " when ſhe pleaded her cauſe before the miniſter " of his juſtice, whom he deputed to repreſent " his perſon? Did he approve of her conduct in " leaving her maſter's houſe, &c.? Did he ſignify " to her, that her character of Abram's wife, or

" the

" the ſeverity of Sarah's treatment, even in her " actual ſtate of pregnancy, emancipated her " from her bondage, reſcinded the original con- " tract of her purchaſe, or that that contract " had been illicit, and contrary to his laws, &c. " No. On the contrary, her conduct was con- " demned by the repreſentative of God, who " ordered her in his name to return to her " miſtreſs, and ſubmit herſelf under her hands; " though at the ſame time he aſſured her *that the* " *Lord had heard her affliction.*"

From this moſt ſingular comment Mr. H. immediately concludes, " that the licitneſs of the " ſlave trade is evidently warranted by the written " word of God." But before we allow the caſe of Hagar to be a ſanction for a ſubſequent courſe of conduct, of ſo diſſimilar a nature, let us examine the deductions which Mr. H. in his foregoing comment has endeavoured to draw from this ſtory, and which he muſt eſtabliſh before it can be of the leaſt ſervice to the cauſe it is introduced to ſupport: Theſe evidently are,

I. That in caſe the cauſe of Hagar had been tried before a juſt and impartial human tribunal, they would have been culpable in deciding upon it according to the known laws of juſtice and humanity.

II. That on all ſubſequent occaſions, where a perſon has ſuffered under the rod of oppreſſion, it is the buſineſs of a judge to ſend back the ſufferer to receive further ill treatment.

III. That becauſe Hagar was ordered by an angel to return to her miſtreſs, it is lawful for the merchants of Europe to carry on a Trade for Slaves to the coaſt of Africa.

I ſhall cloſe my preſent letter with a few obſervations on each of theſe deductions.

I. The Supreme Being alone can ſearch the hearts of men, and the reaſons of *his immediate determinations* are not always apparent to his creatures, who can only form their imperfect judgment from external circumſtances.—It was therefore no doubt conſiſtent with his wiſdom and juſtice to direct Hagar's return. *He had power to ſoften the heart of her miſtreſs towards her*, and to *recompenſe her obedience as he thought good*;—but would an earthly tribunal have been therefore excuſable, in diſcarding every principle of juſtice, and ſending Hagar back to receive further ill treatment? — The idea is equally wicked and ridiculous.

II. It ſeems ſcarcely poſſible to conceive a higher degree of preſumption, than that of applying the *particular judgments* of God to ſubſequent purpoſes and occaſions. That a caſe *exactly ſimilar* in all points to that of Hagar has ever ſince happened, may very fairly be doubted; and until that does really happen, the decree of the Supreme Being *appropriated* to that caſe, can never again be applicable. Beſides, the powers and faculties of our minds are not ſufficiently extenſive, to enable us to judge of the circumſtances in all their connections, even if ſuch a caſe ſhould again exiſt.—To reaſon therefore from this inſtance, to others which evidently bear only a *partial* or *diſtant reſemblance* to it, is the extreme of arrogance; and to act in conſequence of ſuch reaſoning, would be the extreme of wickedneſs.

III. But from what circumſtances in this ſtory does Mr. H. deduce the very extraordinary concluſion,

cluſion, " *That the Slave Trade, even when attended* " *with circumſtances not altogether conformable to* " *the feelings of humanity,* is *eſſentially conſiſtent with* " *the ſacred and inalienable rights of juſtice, and has* " *the poſitive ſanction of God in its ſupport?*" What? Becauſe the Lord, by his angel, ordered Hagar to return to her maſter, to whom ſhe was under ſome kind of obligation for ſervice, whether voluntary or involuntary does not appear, to whom ſhe was *legally married,* and by whom ſhe was *then pregnant*; does it by any rule of conſtruction follow, that Mr. H. or any other perſon, has *an inherent right,* either forcibly, or by the colourable pretext of purchaſe, to ſeize upon an inhabitant of *Whidah,* or *Congo,* whom *he had never before ſeen,* to carry him on board a ſhip, and expoſe him for ſeveral months to a variety of dangers; and if he ſurvives, to deliver him over to a planter, to exhauſt the remainder of his days in extreme labour, under *the immediate diſcipline of the ſcourge?* — Juſtice, humanity, and common ſenſe equally revolt at ſuch a deduction. — But as Mr. H. has openly diſclaimed all connection with theſe dangerous guides of human conduct, I ſhall apply my remark in a different form; and aſſure him, that whenever a ſtronger hand than his own ſhall hurry him on board a ſhip, and conſign him to the care of an American planter for the reſt of his days, the caſe of Hagar will, according to his own explanation of it, be as good an authority for this proceeding, as when it was introduced to give a ſanction to the African Slave Trade.

LETTER III.

IF you will keep in view the diſtinction between a blind and ſuperſtitious admiſſion, that every fact authoriſed in the Old and New Teſtaments, is to be taken as a rule of conduct, without any conſideration of concurrent circumſtances; and the reaſonable and orthodox conſtruction of the Scriptures, which I have contended for, viz. That determinations in particular circumſtances, and under ſo peculiar a diſpenſation as that of the Jews, can be no authority for general conduct; you will hold in your hand a clue, which will ſafely guide you through all the windings and intricacies of Mr. H's *labyrinth*, and will find, that every other authority he has quoted, will, when examined by this rule, have as little weight in juſtifying the principle of the Slave Trade, as the ſtory of Abram and Hagar.

For inſtance,—the hiſtory of Joſeph's hoarding the corn, and afterwards ſelling it to the Egyptians, contains a great variety of particular circumſtances; all of them intirely different from any thing in the African Slave Trade. Joſeph had foreſeen the famine, and had prudently made a reſerve of corn during the ſeven years of plenty; by

by which he had moſt probably ſaved the lives of the greateſt part of the inhabitants; but have the merchants of Europe ever conferred a ſimilar obligation on the natives of Africa? The purchaſe of this corn muſt have amounted to a conſiderable ſum of money, which had been circulated amongſt the Egyptians; and Joſeph was therefore in ſome reſpects juſtified in reſelling the corn, and perhaps at an advanced price. But have *ſuch* of the natives of Africa as are reduced to ſlavery, ever received any kind of compenſation for the depriyation of every thing dear to them? In the event it turns out that Joſeph did not reduce the Egyptians to a ſtate of actual bondage; but that he entered into a compact with them, viz. That he ſhould give them ſeed to ſow the land, and that they ſhould have *four parts* of the produce, and Pharaoh the fifth part.

Not one of the inhabitants was ſold to any diſtant country, nor ever removed out of the kingdom of Egypt; nor does it appear, that any other end was effected by this tranſaction, than merely the levying a tax of one-fifth of the produce throughout the kingdom; * no ſubſequent notice being taken in the ſacred books, that the inhabitants of Egypt were held in ſlavery by their own kings: On the contrary, it appears that in the following reign, the Egyptians had reduced into ſlavery the children of Iſrael, and acted the part of taſk-maſters over them.†

What then ſhall we think of the reaſonableneſs and modeſty of Mr. H.? who has thought it neceſſary to employ his time in making a calculation of the number of inhabitants at that period in Egypt; which he finds to have amounted to

* Gen. ch. xlvii. ver. 26. † Exod. ch. i. ver. 8.

ſeven or eight millions, and which he ſuppoſes is a number not unequal to all the purchaſes of the kind ever made by Engliſh merchants, ſince the commencement of the ſlave trade!

After all—will it be ſaid, that under the light we now enjoy in the Chriſtian diſpenſation, the conduct of Joſeph ought to be a rule for the conduct of the governor of a country in modern times; even ſuppoſing it poſſible the ſame events ſhould again come to paſs? Would it be conſiſtent with the very poſitive injunction of our Lord, "*Give to him that aſketh thee, and from him that would borrow from thee turn not thou away?*"* The withholding the corn till the people ſurrendered their lands, and even their perſonal liberties, implies *a right* in Joſeph (though at that time the governor, and conſequently the protector of the country) to withhold the corn, *even though the inhabitants ſhould periſh for want of it.*—A poſition which may well be doubted. And, granting the ſtory in the extent Mr. H. requires, where was the policy or advantage in Pharaoh being a *Slave-holder* or *Tyrant*, rather than the king of a happy and independent people?

If then the inſtance of Joſeph's conduct towards the Egyptians would not in modern times, under the light of the goſpel, be a ſanction for the ruler of a country under ſimilar circumſtances, to follow his example—how, in the name of common ſenſe, can it be an authority for the *Slave Trade?* By which, without any pretence of compenſation, the inhabitants of Africa are carried away from their native country, and compelled

* Matt. ch. v. ver. 42.

to

to intenſe labour; with no further allowance than what is barely ſufficient to ſupport their exiſtence. The inhabitants of Egypt enjoyed *four-fifths of the produce of the land*; their countrymen in modern times are not allowed *one fiftieth*. Pharaoh we are told was hard of heart. *What then ſhall we think of the preſent ſyſtem of Slavery?*

From theſe inſtances of Hagar and of Joſeph, Mr. H. informs us, he thinks he has ſufficiently demonſtrated that the Slave Trade has the indiſputable ſanction of Divine Authority, and is in exact conformity with the principles of the law of nature, as delineated in the ſacred writings of the word of God. But whether ſuch reaſoning would not diſgrace any cauſe, except the cauſe it is intended to defend, I leave you to judge?

I now come to that part of Mr. H's work, in which he attempts to ſhew, that the Slave Trade is in conformity with the principles of the *Moſaic law*. That ſuch was the practice among the Iſraelites, and that ſuch practice was allowed under the Moſaic inſtitution, I have already admitted; but before I enter further in the diſcuſſion of this part of the queſtion, I ſhall beg leave to make one obſervation on the only hiſtorical fact cited by Mr. H. under the law as an authority for ſlavery, viz. that of Joſhua's treatment of the inhabitants of Gibeon.

The ſacred writings inform us, that the land of Gibeon was given to the children of Iſrael, who were authoriſed *by an expreſs revelation from God*, to deſtroy all the inhabitants of the land.* For what particular crimes in the nations ad-

* Joſh. ch. i. ver. 2, 3. and ch. ix. ver. 24.

jacent

jacent to the Iſraelites theſe heavy judgments were denounced againſt them, does not appear; ſuch however was the power and authority with which Joſhua was inveſted at the time the event cited by Mr. H. took place.

But where is the revelation by which the inhabitants of Africa are delivered up to the people of Europe? Where is the authority of the kingdom of England over that of Angola? Whence is it derived? Who hath ever heard it aſſerted? Or in what writings, ſacred or prophane, is it to be found?

This circumſtance, then, which is the *foundation* and *ſole juſtification* of Joſhua's ſubſequent conduct, being wanting in the caſe to which it is now applied, entirely deſtroys all ſimilarity between them.

For the Gibeonites having been abſolutely delivered up to the power of Joſhua, who was authoriſed, and even commanded to deſtroy them; he could, with the permiſſion of God, change that ſeverity of treatment to a milder puniſhment; and from ſuch change, the Gibeonites derived a great advantage, viz. the preſervation of their lives. But have the Slave-dealers of Europe ſaved from deſtruction and extirpation any of the nations of Africa? Have the judgments of God been denounced againſt thoſe people, and have ſuch judgments been averted by the humanity or interference of the Europeans? On the contrary, have they not, for ages paſt, in oppoſition to the poſitive laws of God, in open contempt of the Chriſtian religion, and without any other authority than that of being the ſtrongeſt, deſolated and diſ-

peopled

peopled one of the moſt populous and fertile parts of the univerſe? Whether this has given them a right, equal to that of Joſhua over the Gibeonites, I leave to Mr. H. to explain. I muſt however agree with him in thinking, *that it is eaſy to conclude, whether the reducing the innocent as well as the guilty part of our fellow-creatures to the condition of ſlaves, or even to hereditary bondage or ſlavery, be in its own nature licit, or illicit, criminal, or unjuſt.* And I truſt that no perſon, who has candidly attended to the ſubject in diſpute, can have a doubt upon the queſtion.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

I HAVE already admitted, that the practice of ſlavery was permitted to the Iſraelites and their immediate anceſtors:—But I have at the ſame time aſſerted, that ſuch permiſſion *was confined to that people only*, and was not extended to the reſt of mankind. I ſhall now undertake to ſhew, that the practice of ſlavery, as allowed to the Iſraelites, ſo far from receiving a ſanction from, was aboliſhed by the Chriſtian diſpenſation, as being totally irreconcilable with the firſt principles of the religion of its divine author.

Mr. H. has endeavoured to intrench himſelf, by every precaution in his power, againſt the attack, which he well knew his cauſe was expoſed to receive from this quarter, and has ſtipulated, that the books of the Old and New Teſtaments ſhall be conſidered as of equal authority. But if Mr. H. be as fully ſatisfied as he pretends to be, that the doctrines of our Saviour are uniformly of the ſame tendency as thoſe of the Moſaic law, why does he ſo earneſtly labour to eſtabliſh a propoſition, which the greateſt part of his readers will ſcarcely be inclined to grant him? Does he not appear to have been

been aware, not only that his cauſe would derive no authority from the New Teſtament, but that the diſpenſations of the new law, might in ſome reſpects interfere with and contradict thoſe of the old?

That this may reaſonably be preſumed to be Mr. H's true motive for endeavouring to eſtabliſh the equal authority of the Old and New Teſtament, will appear from conſidering the reaſons he gives, for having been more particular in bringing the laſt part of his Reſearches into what he calls a central point of view, viz. "That "he has reaſon to apprehend, that ſeveral of his "readers would be apt to imagine, that by the "eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion the Law "of Moſes was totally aboliſhed, and annulled in "every part of it; and to every intent and pur-"poſe, both typical and moral." Now it is impoſſible for Mr. H. to be ſo ignorant as not to know, that every ſect and denomination of Chriſtians admit the moral precepts of the Old Teſtament, whenever they do not interfere with the purer doctrines of the Chriſtian ſcheme—this then could not be the true motive for his being ſo particular on this head. The fact is, he hoped that by eſtabliſhing the equality of the Old Teſtament to the New, he could with more advantage make the authorities which he pretended to find in the former, for the general juſtification of ſlavery, militate againſt the expreſs and unequivocal precepts againſt it, which are contained in the latter.

Of what great importance the eſtabliſhment of this propoſition is to Mr. H's argument, will appear from the uſe he has attempted to make of it,

it. " From this undeniable poſition, ſays he, it " follows neceſſarily, that *as the writings of both* " *the Teſtaments have the ſame weight of authority*, " eſſentially incapable of contradicting itſelf, in " ſupport of thoſe principles and deciſions en- " acted and regiſtered in their reſpective records, " concerning the intrinſic morality or immorality " of human actions, whatever is declared in the " one to be intrinſically good or bad, juſt or " unjuſt, licit or illicit, muſt inevitably be ſo " *according to the principles of the other.* If there- " fore the Slave Trade appears, *as I truſt it does*, " from the preceding train of Scriptural Argu- " ments, in perfect harmony with the principles " and deciſions of the word of God, regiſtered " in the ſacred writings of the Old Teſtament, " reſpecting the intrinſic nature of that trade, " this of courſe can bear no oppoſition to, but " muſt neceſſarily be in equal perfect harmony " with the principles and deciſions of the word " of God, reſpecting right and juſtice,—regiſter- " ed in the ſacred writings of the New. This " general but forcible argument, were it even un- " ſupported by any collateral evidences from the " writings of the New Teſtament, would be fully " ſufficient to verify my third and laſt aſſertion " reſpecting the licitneſs of the Slave Trade, as " perfectly conformable to the principles of the " Chriſtian diſpenſation."

Thus Mr. H. has repoſed the whole weight of his argument in favour of the Slave Trade, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation (as unſupported by any collateral evidence from the writings of the " New Teſtament) on this ſingle propoſition, " *that the writings of both the Teſtaments have the*

" *ſame*

" *ſame weight of authority.*" I ſhall therefore firſt proceed to give the moſt indubitable evidence that *this is not the fact*; and that the New Teſtament *not only poſſeſſes, but has exerciſed* a controlling power over the Old, *even in points of moral conduct*, in conſequence of which, " This general " and forcible argument, which is itſelf ſufficient " to verify the aſſertion that the licitneſs of the " Slave Trade is perfectly conformable to the " principles of the Chriſtian diſpenſation," will be found entirely groundleſs;—after which I ſhall proceed to conſider what he calls his collateral evidences derived from the New Teſtament.

After having, with ſome indecency of expreſſion, aſſerted that " God never did, nor ever could, alter by any diſpenſation whatever, thoſe eternal principles and laws, which are the very baſis and foundation of true religion; and conſequently of the religion of Chriſt," he adduces, as he ſays, " no leſs an authority in con- " firmation of this indiſputable doctrine, than the " very words of the Son of God, who in that " divine ſermon on the mount, in which he gave " his diſciples a moſt minute and circumſtantial " account of the principles and tenets of his goſ- " pel, condemned the above erroneous opinion " in the moſt explicit terms, and forbad them " even to think of it. *Think not, ſaid he, that I* " *am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets; I came* " *not to deſtroy, but to fulfil.*"

This being the only authority produced by Mr. H. in ſupport of his aſſertion, of the *equality of the Old and New Teſtaments*, I ſhall firſt point out, what I conceive to be the true purport of that paſſage; and ſhall afterwards produce ſuch authorities,

rities, in ſupport of my opinion, as I think the warmeſt friends of Mr. H. muſt admit to be deciſive on the point in queſtion.

" *Think not, ſays our Saviour, that I am come to* " *deſtroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to* " *deſtroy, but to fulfil.*"

By which is clearly to be underſtood, that he came not to overthrow thoſe firſt principles of morality, which are inculcated in the Old Teſtament, *but to improve and carry them to a higher degree of perfection*; and accordingly in the ſequel of his diſcourſe, he adverts to *many actions and modes of conduct* which were *permitted under the law*, but which he declares are *improper*, and *actually prohibits, thereby making a moſt eſſential difference between the morality of the Old Teſtament, and that of the New.*

Matt. ch. v. ver. 21. " Ye have heard that it " was ſaid by them of old time, thou ſhalt not " kill; and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in " danger of the judgment.

" 22. But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever is " angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall " be in danger of the judgment, &c.

" 27. Ye have heard that it was ſaid of old " time, thou ſhalt not commit adultery.

" 28. But I ſay unto you, that whoſoever " looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath " committed adultery already with her in his " heart.

" 38. Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, " an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

" 39. But I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not " evil; but whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy " right cheek, turn to him the other alſo.

" 43. Ye

" 43. Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, " thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine " enemy.

" 44. But I ſay unto you, *Love your enemies,* " *bleſs them that curſe you, and pray for them which* " *deſpitefully uſe you and perſecute you.*"

Could any doubt remain after conſidering the foregoing paſſage, as to the meaning of our Saviour's declaration, that *he came not to deſtroy, but to fulfil,* or the ſuperior and controlling power of the Chriſtian diſpenſation, the following explicit declaration of the Apoſtle Paul, upon the ſubject, will perhaps have as much weight as the poſitive aſſertions of Mr. H. to the contrary.

Heb. ch. vii. ver. 18. " *For there is verily a* " *diſannulling of the commandment going before, for* " *the weakneſs and unprofitableneſs thereof.*"

" 19. For *the law made nothing perfect,* but the " bringing in of a better hope *did,* by the which " we draw nigh unto God.

" 22. By ſo much was Jeſus made a ſurety of " *a better Teſtament.*"

Thus then it appears to demonſtration, that the Chriſtian religion is not only ſuperior to the Moſaic inſtitution, but that it's authority was exerted to change or make void, or in the words of the apoſtle, " *to diſannul the commandment going before*; and conſequently all denominations of Chriſtians muſt admit, that wherever the ſanctions and ordinances of the Old Teſtament interfere with the purer doctrines and more humane precepts of the New, they are not to be regarded as of ſufficient weight to juſtify the followers of Chriſt, in the imitation of them.

Nor is it from this circumſtance to be preſumptuouſly inferred (as Mr. H. affects to think)

" That God is not conſiſtent with himſelf; or " that the religion of the New Teſtament, in- " ſtead of being the perfection and accompliſh- " ment, is the reproach and condemnation of the " old law." The Moſaic inſtitution was not of general import, but was principally confined to the Jews; and contained regulations, both of a civil and religious nature, proper to that people, under a Theocratic Government, but inapplicable in many inſtances to mankind in general.—Nor was it in many reſpects ſo pure and perfect in its moral precepts, as that with which mankind were afterwards favoured. Upon this point the teſtimony of the Apoſtle Paul, in his Epiſtle to the Galatians (who appear to have receded from the goſpel diſpenſation to the inadequate precepts of the old law) is ſo peculiarly applicable, that I cannot avoid citing it as a full anſwer to Mr. Harris's charge of inconſiſtency in the Old and New Teſtaments.

Galatians, ch. iii. ver. 19. " *Wherefore then* " *ſerveth the law?* It was added becauſe of tranſ- " greſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come to whom " the promiſe was made, and it was ordained by " angels in the hand of a mediator.

" 21. *Is the law then againſt the promiſes of* " *God? God forbid*—for if there had been a law " given, *which could have given life*—verily *right-* " *eouſneſs ſhould have been by the law.*

" 22. But the ſcripture hath concluded all " under ſin—that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus " Chriſt might be given to them that believe.

" 23. But *before faith came* we were kept under " the law, ſhut up unto the faith, which ſhould " afterwards be revealed.

" 24. Where-

" 24. Wherefore *the law was our ſchoolmaſter* " to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſ- " tified by faith.

" 25. *But after that faith is come we are no* " *longer under a ſchoolmaſter.*"

From this paſſage then it will appear, that the daring accuſation thrown out by Mr. H. that the Supreme Being is inconſiſtent with himſelf, becauſe he did not, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, confirm and confine himſelf to every moral injunction of the Old Teſtament, can only be made by *ſuch perſons*, as, having for intereſted purpoſes attempted to eſtabliſh a ſyſtem which the evident purport of the Scriptures cannot ſupport, have no method to hide their diſgrace, but by this direct and dreadful imputation on the ſacred writings and their Divine Author.

It is alſo equally evident from the foregoing paſſages of the New Teſtament, not only that the moral prohibitions of our Saviour extended further than the injunctions of the old law, and rendered that conduct *unlawful*, which had before been permitted, but that ſuch prohibitions actually extended to the particular caſe in queſtion, and that *all practices*, inimical to the general welfare and intereſts of mankind, were from thenceforth to be aboliſhed; for *if it be the duty of a Chriſtian not to reſiſt evil—to love his enemies—to bleſs thoſe that curſe, and pray for thoſe who perſecute him,—how can it be ſuppoſed that he ſhall at the ſame time have an inherent right to do evil unto another—to injure thoſe who never injured him—and to deſtroy thoſe, who ſo far from having either perſecuted, or curſed him, have never known that ſuch a perſon was in exiſtence?*

I do not conceive it neceſſary to follow Mr. H. through the *tedious argument*, by which he labours to prove, that the ſilence of the New Teſtament reſpecting *the ſlave trade*, (ſuppoſing it to be ſilent on the ſubject) is a virtual approbation of that practice. The New Teſtament is totally ſilent on many *crimes* of the greateſt magnitude, if ſuch ſilence is to be inferred from its not containing *particular prohibitions againſt them*;—but will any perſon contend that ſuch crimes are lawful, becauſe no ſpecific denunciations are pronounced againſt them by our Saviour? Or are they not underſtood to be included in thoſe general prohibitions and commands, to love our neighbour as ourſelves, which compoſe the ſum and eſſence of the Chriſtian religion?

But if the books of the New Teſtament be ſilent on many particular offences, they lay down general and moſt powerful precepts for the regulation of the heart and life, leaving the profeſſors of Chriſtianity to apply theſe precepts to particular caſes; and they who have imbibed the true ſpirit of charity, breathed in the goſpel, will not find it neceſſary to adopt a long train of reaſoning, in order to perceive whether the *ſlave trade* be lawful, or not; but as ſoon as they underſtand its nature and conſequences, will feel a lively conviction, *that Chriſtianity abhors the practice.*

The implied arguments of Mr. H. in favour of the ſlave trade, from *the exact conformity of the moral precepts of the New Teſtament with thoſe of the Old*, and the *ſilence of the New Teſtament on that ſpecific crime*, being thus ſufficiently refuted; it may now be proper to turn to what he calls his collateral proofs from the New Teſtament, or thoſe

thoſe paſſages which he pretends afford a poſitive ſanction to the ſlave trade, under the new law.

This ſanction he conceives he has found in two of the epiſtles of Paul, viz. The 1ſt of thoſe to Tim. c. vi. v. 1, and that to Philemon, v. 8.

But what ſhall we ſay, if this ſlender twig, which is now the only ſupport of the ſinking advocate for ſlavery, ſhould deſert him; and it ſhould appear, from a candid and diſpaſſionate examination of the paſſages in queſtion, that the precepts of the apoſtle, introduced by Mr. H. to juſtify a courſe of conduct in direct oppoſition to the precepts of Chriſtianity, afford not the ſlighteſt inference inimical to the general rules of goodwill and benevolence inculcated in other parts of the New Teſtament?

In the paſſage firſt cited by Mr. H. Tim. c. iv. v. 1, the apoſtle Paul exhorts "as many as are "under the yoke, to count their maſters worthy "of all honour, that the name of God and his "doctrine be not blaſphemed; and that they who "have believing maſters, ſhould not deſpiſe them, "becauſe they are brethren, but rather do them "ſervice, &c."—From whence he infers, "that "the primitive Chriſtians were not only not for-"bidden, but *expreſsly allowed*, by the principles "of our religion, the purchaſing of ſlaves, and "keeping their fellow creatures, nay, even their "fellow Chriſtians, under the yoke of bondage or "ſlavery."

Now taking for granted, what perhaps may well be diſputed, that the perſons ſpoken of in this paſſage were ſlaves for life,—it muſt be remembered, that the great author of the Chriſtian ſyſtem did not think proper to oppoſe his authority to the

political arrangements which at the time of his miſſion ſubſiſted on the face of the earth. His doctrines always inculcated ſubmiſſion to ſuperiors, and patience under injuries; and this doctrine the apoſtle applies, in the preſent inſtance, to a particular claſs of perſons, to whom he thought ſuch admonitions were neceſſary; requiring them "to count their maſters worthy of all honour," meaning thereby, that during the continuance of their ſervitude (the origin, nature, or duration of which does not appear,) they ſhould perform their duty, and patiently ſubmit to the ſituation in which they were placed; but by no means juſtifying any perſon *who held another in illegal or forcible ſubjection*. The apoſtle exhorts theſe ſervants to account their maſters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blaſphemed; *but* which Chriſtian-like ſubmiſſion, and forbearance, *though an act of virtue in the ſervant*, could by no means *juſtify*, but would rather tend to aggravate, the crime of the maſter. In exact conformity to this doctrine is the precept of our Saviour, "*If any one ſtrike thee on thy right cheek*, "*turn to him the other alſo.*" But will Mr. H. maintain that it is lawful to ſtrike a Chriſtian, becauſe his religion commands him not to reſiſt evil? Or is it not rather the higheſt aggravation, that the meek and peaceable deportment of the perſon offended, could not ſecure him from inſult and abuſe?

The long quotation Mr. H. has made from the Epiſtle of Paul to Philemon, is ſo far from being a juſtification of ſlavery, that to every perſon not peruſing the ſcriptures with a particular bias on his mind, it is evidently a powerful exhortation againſt

againſt it. The apoſtle ſends back Oneſimus to his maſter, requeſting him to receive him, "*not as* "*a ſervant, but above a ſervant*; a *brother beloved*, "eſpecially to me, but how much more unto "thee, *both in the fleſh and in the Lord.*" Where does the apoſtle addreſs Philemon in the words expreſsly attributed to him by Mr. H. "*that he* "*would never attempt to deprive him of his ſlave?*" Where does he acknowledge to Philemon, "that "Oneſimus is his own brother in Chriſt, though "*ſtill his property according to the fleſh?*" Theſe paſſages ſeem to be the laſt reſort of a perſon, who, not being able to ſupport his aſſertion from the evident purport of the words, is obliged to have recourſe to *forgery and interpolation.*

Such however are the grounds upon which Mr. H. has ventured to infringe upon the poſitive commands of our Saviour, with reſpect to our conduct towards each other;—but an apprehenſion ariſing in his mind, that theſe paſſages might, after all the pains employed in enforcing them, be inſufficient to anſwer his purpoſe, whilſt the precepts of good-will given to mankind in the New Teſtament remained unimpeached—he finds it neceſſary, in the laſt place, to abridge the purport of theſe precepts, and to weaken their influence. For this purpoſe, he ſelects out of the many ſimilar paſſages which the New Teſtament affords, one which he conceives may bear a more limited ſenſe; and be explained in ſuch a manner, as not to appear inconſiſtent with his favourite eſtabliſhment. Whether he has been fortunate in his ſelection will appear from a ſhort inveſtigation.

Matt. c. vii. v. 12. "All things whatſoever ye "would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even

" ſo to them; for this is the law and the pro-
" phets."

This divine precept, delivered by Chriſt to his diſciples at the concluſion of his ſermon on the mount, is ſo ſtrict an injunction againſt every kind of injuſtice and oppreſſion; expreſſed in a manner ſo forcible, and preſcribing a teſt of our conduct ſo eaſily applied upon every occaſion, that Mr. H. was aware it could not be overlooked in this controverſy; and he has accordingly employed the utmoſt of his ſophiſtry to evade its import.

After ſtating the paſſage, he gives the converſe of it in the following words.

" Whatſoever things therefore we would not
" that men ſhould do to us, we are not even ſo to
" do to them; but no perſon whatever would
" certainly wiſh that a fellow-creature ſhould re-
" duce him to the condition of a ſlave, therefore
" no perſon whatever is to reduce a fellow-crea-
" ture to that condition."

" Here, ſays he, I muſt obſerve, that no one
" can juſtly tax me with any partiality to the
" cauſe I have eſpouſed; I have, I think, worded
" the argument againſt it, in terms as forcible as
" the moſt zealous advocate for African liberty
" could uſe; but unanſwerable as the ſame may
" appear to them, it is but *a plauſible argument at*
" *beſt*.

" It is an axiom in logic, that an argument
" that proves too much, proves nothing—*the*
" *above is juſt ſuch a one*; for by the ſame manner
" of reaſoning, one might equally conclude, con-
" trary to the law, and the prophets, and the doc-
" trine of the Chriſtian religion, that not only
" ſlavery, but every other kind of ſubordination

" of

" of one man to another, ought not to be ſuffered " to continue in the world. The argument, if " concluſive in the former caſe, muſt be equally " ſo in the latter. I enforce it thus :—

" *All things whatſoever*, ſays our bleſſed Sa- " viour, *that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to* " *them, for this is the law and the prophets.* What- " ſoever things therefore we would not that men " ſhould do to us, we are not even ſo to do to " them; but every perſon would naturally wiſh " not to be controlled by a fellow-creature, not " to be *under any ſubjection* to him, but to be ab- " ſolute maſter of his own actions; no perſon " therefore ought to keep a fellow-creature under " any control or ſubjection whatever."

Surely ſo manifeſt a perverſion of the precepts of Chriſt, never before diſgraced the preſs. *It is not true* that every perſon would wiſh *not to be controlled by a fellow-creature, nor to be under any ſubjection to him, but to be abſolute maſter of his own actions.* Every man of common ſenſe knows, that from the conſtitution of the univerſe, he is dependant on, and muſt neceſſarily in many reſpects be controlled by others; and none but an idiot would wiſh to be diſcharged from the relative duties of life, and to be abſolute maſter of his own actions. Nor is any ſituation in life exempt from this general law, which by an interchange of good offices binds together the vaſt fabrick of ſociety—but every man may reaſonably object to his being *forcibly reduced to a ſtate of ſlavery*, and deprived of thoſe natural rights which the reſt of mankind enjoy—a ſtate which ſo far from occaſioning an interchange of good offices, gives riſe on the one hand only to pride, cruelty and injuſtice; and on the

the other, to fear, meanneſs, and hatred. It does not then by any means follow, that *becauſe* mankind have an uniform averſion to a ſtate of ſlavery, they have *therefore* a diſlike to all the other natural and juſt ſubordinations and dependencies of life; and Mr. H's impeachment of this precept is therefore as unfounded as all his other attempts to explain away the evident purport of the doctrines of the New Teſtament.

Having found that the ſenſe evidently implied in, and univerſally underſtood from, theſe words, is not the true one, he gives us his own definition of it.——"Every Chriſtian, ſays he, is taught and "directed to do unto others as he would be done "unto, and by a neceſſary conſequence, not to do "unto others as he would not be done unto;— "that is, ſays he, every Chriſtian is commanded "to behave to his neighbour in whatever ſitua- "tion or circumſtances in life *providence may have* "*placed them both*, juſt as he would wiſh his neigh- "bour to behave to him, in his ſituation, were "his neighbour's ſituation and circumſtances his "own." Deſpicable evaſion! Wretched ſophiſtry! Shall a man, who has voluntarily and forcibly reduced another to a ſtate of the moſt abject miſery of which his nature is capable, impiouſly aſſert that *providence has placed him in that ſituation?* Shall he ſatisfy himſelf with the plauſible pretext of acting with kindneſs towards him, whilſt he has it in his power to extend to him that mercy which *in the ſame ſituation he would himſelf moſt ardently wiſh for.* As well might the midnight murderer, who holds the knife over the innocent victim of his cruelty, aſſert that *providence has delivered him into his hands*, and claim a merit in putting

putting him to death with as little pain as poſſible. Surely if it be the duty of a Chriſtian to relieve thoſe who are in ſituations of diſtreſs, it is *not leſs* incumbent on him to place them in a better ſituation, as often as it lies in his power.

That the Chriſtian religion is inimical in its nature to every ſpecies of oppreſſion, and particularly to that which involves in it almoſt every other kind of guilt, is I hope already evident. But as a further confirmation of this ſentiment, it may not be improper to ſhew, what has been the general ſenſe of mankind as to the ſpirit and purport of the Chriſtian religion. So oppoſite are its precepts to the encouragement of ſlavery, that a celebrated hiſtorian,* has not ſcrupled to account for the degree of liberty, which is at preſent enjoyed throughout moſt parts of Europe, from the influence of this religion on the minds of the people.—I ſhall give you the paſſage.—

" The gentle ſpirit of the Chriſtian religion, " together with the doctrines which it teaches " concerning the original equality of mankind, " as well as the impartial eye with which the Al- " mighty regards men of every condition, and " admits them to a participation of his benefits, " are inconſiſtent with ſervitude; but in this, " as in many other inſtances, *conſiderations of inte-* " *reſt*, and *the maxims of falſe policy*, led men to a " conduct inconſiſtent with their principles. They " were ſo ſenſible, however, of their inconſiſten- " cy, that to ſet their fellow Chriſtians at liberty " from ſervitude, was deemed an act of piety

* Robertſon's Hiſt. Charles V. Proofs and illuſt. v. 1. note 20.

" highly

" highly meritorious, and acceptable to heaven. " The *humane ſpirit of the Chriſtian religion* ſtrug- " gled with the maxims and manners of the world, " and *contributed more than any other circumſtance to* " *introduce the practice of manumiſſion.*"

The ſame author furniſhes us with an authentic document, as a proof of this fact; which, as it proceeds from the apoſtolic chair, will have its due weight with Mr. H. It contains the reaſons aſſigned by Pope Gregory the Great, in the ſixth century, for granting liberty to his ſlaves.

" Cum Redemptor noſter, totius conditor na- " turæ, ad hoc propitiatus, humanam carnem " voluerit aſſumere, ut divinitatis ſuæ gratia, di- " rempto (quo tenebamur captivi) vinculo, pri- " ſtinæ nos reſtituerit libertati; ſalubriter agitur, " ſi homines, *quos ab initio liberos natura protulit*, " & jus gentium jugo ſubſtituit ſervitutis, in ea " qua nati fuerant, manumittentis beneficio, li- " bertate reddantur."*

And the uſual tenor of the charters of manumiſſion is—*pro amore dei—pro remedio animæ*, &c. clearly expreſſing the ſenſe the inhabitants of Europe have entertained, that the manumiſſion of ſlaves was an act *in conformity to the precepts of the Chriſtian religion.*

Were I to continue theſe authorities down to the preſent times, and cite to Mr. H. the opinions

* Seeing that Jeſus Chriſt, the author of all nature, for this expreſs purpoſe, aſſumed the fleſh, that by the favour of his divine power (the bonds of captivity being broken) he might reſtore us to our former liberty: We conceive it to be devoutly done, if, by the favour of manumiſſion, MEN, whom nature originally made free, and human laws ſubjected to the yoke of ſervitude, were again reſtored to that liberty in which they were born.

of

of the many reſpectable clergymen of every ſect in theſe kingdoms who have oppoſed this unlawful traffic; ſome of them *ſolely and expreſsly* on the ground of its being contrary to the dictates of the Chriſtian Religion, they would perhaps have little weight with him; but with the rational and diſpaſſionate part of mankind, they will not be without their effect; and will be no inconſiderable authority towards the deduction which I conceive I may fairly be allowed to make from the foregoing remarks, viz. THAT THE PRACTICE OF SLAVERY, AS ALLOWED AMONGST THE JEWS, WAS ABROGATED BY THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION, AND DOES NOT NOW EXIST EITHER IN THEIR IMMEDIATE DESCENDANTS, OR IN ANY OTHER PEOPLE.

If Mr. H. remains diſſatisfied with a concluſion in ſuch direct oppoſition to the *long corollaries* at the end of his book, he muſt contend, that the particular privilege granted to the Jews, and their anceſtors, *is not annulled*, but yet exiſts in full force. And, as I have before remarked, muſt, *if ſuch a privilege be hereditary*, inſtitute an enquiry into their *lineal deſcendants*, amongſt whom I apprehend he will find ſome difficulty in inrolling the inhabitants of theſe kingdoms.

But if he denies alſo this laſt propoſition; and aſſerts that the permiſſion of holding others in ſlavery, was given indiſcriminately to all mankind; I muſt beg you once more to conſider for a moment *the conſequences and abſurdities of ſuch a poſition*. If all mankind *poſſeſs from God*, an *inherent right to reduce into ſubjection any others of their ſpecies*, this right is inherent *as well in the ſlave as in his maſter*, who will therefore be perfectly juſtified in making uſe of his utmoſt exertions to

change

change ſituations with him; and ſhould he ſucceed in his attempt, will, *in his turn*, have "the "poſitive ſanction of God," for *holding by force his former maſter in ſubjection to him.* Thus then this univerſal permiſſion or *licitneſs* of ſlavery, contended for by the author of the pamphlet, terminates in a vindication of univerſal oppreſſion,—in an aſſertion of the right of the ſtronger, at all times to injure and oppreſs the weaker. In ſhort, in a general annihilation of all thoſe reſtraints, which Law, Reaſon, Religion, and Common Senſe, have hitherto impoſed upon mankind.

THE END.

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